

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A method for processing cash advance requests using a process management and workflow system coupled to a data repository, the process management and workflow system connected to an accounting system by a communications link, said method comprising the steps of:

generating a financial report using the accounting system wherein the financial report includes current collateral information for a customer, the current collateral information includes information relating to the customer's accounts receivable, accounts payable, and inventory;

receiving the financial report at the process management and workflow system from the accounting system of the customer via an electronic data interchange;

converting the financial report from a received document format to a predetermined document format by determining whether preprocessing of the financial report is needed, determining whether segmentation of the financial report is needed wherein segmentation includes identifying a location of data within the financial report and relocating data within the financial report such that the report is recognizable, performing a document recognition process, and performing a mapping and translation process on the financial report;

extracting current collateral information from the converted financial report;

~~receiving, from a customer, at the process management and workflow system, collateral information including information relating to the customer's accounts receivable, accounts payable, and inventory;~~

storing the current collateral information in the data repository;

receiving from the customer a cash advance request at the process management and workflow system;

operating the process management and workflow system to record the cash advance request;

~~updating the collateral information of the customer via the process management and workflow system such that the customer collateral information is current;~~

evaluating the current, customer collateral information through the process management and workflow system;

evaluating a current credit status of the customer through the process management and workflow system including an analysis of at least one of the customer's business performance, dilution, and advance rate; and

determining, through the process management and workflow system, to at least one of approve the customer's cash advance request, deny the customer's cash advance request, and initiate a manual review of the customer collateral information.

2. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising the step of operating the process management and workflow system to evaluate whether the collateral information is up-to-date.

3. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 2 wherein if the collateral information is not up-to-date, said method further comprises the step of operating the process management and workflow system to update the collateral information.

4. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein evaluating current credit status comprises the steps reviewing whether money is actually available in a credit line, and whether a borrowing client's business is performing according to expectations.

5. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 4 wherein evaluating current credit status further comprises the steps identifying dilution, reviewing advance rate, and reviewing fraud possibilities.

6. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said method further comprises the step of operating the process management and workflow system to initiate a review and approval process, and to either deny or approve the request.

7. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 6 further comprising the step of notifying a user of a request status.

8. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein if the request is approved, said method further comprises the steps of initiating a wire transfer of funds, and archiving wire transfer details.

9. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 8 wherein if the request is approved, said method further comprises the step of notify the user that wire transfer is complete.

10. (currently amended) A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein the process management and workflow system is coupled to client by a wide area network, and wherein receiving financial information comprises the steps of establishing a communication link between the accounting system and the process management and workflow system, and authenticating validity of the accounting system.

11. (original) A method in accordance with Claim 10 wherein the wide area network is the Internet.

12. (currently amended) A system for processing cash advance requests by a business entity, said system comprising a data repository, and a process management and workflow system for the business entity connected to an accounting system of a customer by a communication link and coupled to said data repository, said process management and workflow system configured to:

receive a financial report from the accounting system via an electronic data interchange, the financial report includes current collateral information of the customer including information relating to the customer's accounts receivable, accounts payable, and inventory;

convert the financial report from a received document format to a predetermined document format by determining whether preprocessing of the financial report is needed, determining whether segmentation of the financial report is needed wherein segmentation includes identifying a location of data within the financial report and relocating data within the report such that the financial report is recognizable, performing a document recognition process, and performing a mapping and translation process on the financial report;

extract current collateral information from the converted financial report;

~~receive from a customer collateral information including information relating to the customer's accounts receivable, accounts payable, and inventory;~~

store said current collateral information in said data repository;

receive from the customer a cash advance request;

record the cash advance request;

~~update said collateral information of the customer such that said customer collateral information is current;~~

evaluate said current, customer collateral information;

evaluate current credit status of the customer including an analysis of at least one of the customer's business performance, dilution, and advance rate; and

determine to at least one of approve the customer's cash advance request, deny the customer's cash advance request, and initiate a manual review of the customer collateral information.

13. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 12 wherein said process management and workflow system is further configured to evaluate whether the collateral information is up-to-date.

14. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 13 wherein said process management and workflow system is further configured to update the collateral information if the collateral information is not up-to-date.

15. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 12 wherein to evaluate current credit status, said process management and workflow system is configured to review whether money is actually available in a credit line, and whether a borrowing client's business is performing according to expectations.

16. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 12 wherein to evaluate current credit status, said process management and workflow system is configured to identify dilution, review advance rate, and review fraud possibilities.

17. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 12 wherein said process management and workflow system is further configured to initiate a review and approval process, and to either deny the request or approve the request.

18. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 17 wherein said process management and workflow system is further configured to notify a user of a request status.

19. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 17 wherein if the request is approved, said process management and workflow is configured to initiate a wire transfer of funds and archive wire transfer details.

20. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 19 wherein if the request is approved, said process management and workflow system further is configured to initiate notifying the user that wire transfer is complete.

21. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 12 wherein said process management and workflow system is coupled to a client by a wide area network, and wherein to receive financial information, a communication link between a client accounting system and said process management and workflow system is established.

22. (original) A system in accordance with Claim 21 wherein said wide area network is the Internet.

23. (currently amended) A method for processing cash advance requests using a process management and workflow system coupled to a data repository, the process management and workflow system connected to an accounting system by a communications link, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving, from a customer at the process management and workflow system, collateral information including information relating to the customer's accounts receivable, accounts payable, and inventory;

storing the collateral information in the data repository;

receiving from the customer a cash advance request at the process management and workflow system;

operating the process management and workflow system to record the cash advance request;

updating the collateral information of the customer by:

receiving via an electronic data interchange a financial report from ~~an~~ the accounting system of the customer wherein the financial report includes current collateral information of the customer,

converting the financial report from a received document format to a predetermined document format by ~~detecting a report type and then by performing a mapping and translation process~~ determining whether preprocessing of the financial report is needed, determining whether segmentation of the financial report is needed wherein segmentation includes identifying a location of data within the financial report and relocating data within the financial report such that the report is recognizable, performing a document recognition process, and performing a mapping and translation process on the financial report,

extracting at least one of accounts receivable data, accounts payable data, and inventory data from the converted financial report,

correcting data extraction errors using a quality control system, and

loading the extracted data into the data repository;

evaluating the current, customer collateral information through the process management and workflow system;

evaluating a current credit status of the customer through the process management and workflow system including an analysis of at least one of the customer's business performance, dilution, and advance rate; and

determining, through the process management and workflow system, to at least one of approve the customer's cash advance request, deny the customer's cash advance request, and initiate a manual review of the customer collateral information.

24. (currently amended) A system for processing cash advance requests, said system comprising a data repository, and a process management and workflow system coupled to said data repository, the process management and workflow system connected to an accounting system by a communications link, said process management and workflow system configured to:

receive from a customer collateral information including information relating to the customer's accounts receivable, accounts payable, and inventory;

store said collateral information in said data repository;

receive from said customer a cash advance request;

record the cash advance request;

update said collateral information of said customer by:

receiving via an electronic data interchange a financial report from ~~an~~ the accounting system of said customer wherein the financial report includes current collateral information of said customer,

converting the financial report from a received document format to a predetermined document format by ~~detecting a report type and then by performing a mapping and translation process~~ determining whether preprocessing of the financial report is needed, determining whether segmentation of the financial report is needed wherein segmentation includes identifying a location of data within the financial report and relocating data within the financial report such that the report is recognizable, performing a document recognition process, and performing a mapping and translation process on the financial report,

extracting at least one of accounts receivable data, accounts payable data, and inventory data from the converted financial report,

correcting data extraction errors using a quality control system, and

loading the extracted data into the data repository;

evaluate said current, customer collateral information;

evaluate current credit status of said customer including an analysis of at least one of said customer's business performance, dilution, and advance rate; and

determine to at least one of approve said customer's cash advance request, deny said customer's cash advance request, and initiate a manual review of said customer collateral information.